

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF
DR. G.D. BERNHEIM

Dr. G.H. Cox

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Historical Sketch of Dr.G.D.Bernheim.
By Dr. G. H. Cox.

Ladies and Gentlemen:-

We are here today as the official representatives, faculties, students, patrons and friends of our two literary institutions at Mt. Pleasant, N.C., over both of which, in days long past and gone, the Rev. Dr. G. D. Bernheim presided, to participate in the ceremonies connected with the unveiling of this excellent portrait of Dr. Bernheim, presented to the Collegiate Institute by Mr. Eugene Clayton Bernheim, in the name of the living members of Dr. Bernheim's family. As a part of this impressive exercise, there has been assigned to me the very great honor of delivering the memorial address. I should have preferred that some abler and more eloquent speaker had been selected for this duty; but, at the same time, I cheerfully and willingly attempt to comply, assuring you that every word that I shall speak will come straight from the heart, born out of a deep love for the man whose gentle, love-lit eyes seem to be looking from that picture.

Dr. Bernheim was my warm personal friend. I knew him for many years; and to know him was to love him. Our friendship dated from the moment of our first acquaintance, and was never disturbed. We were intimately acquainted in church and synodical work, in which we both took an active interest. I frequently visited him in his home, especially during his latter days. Just a few days before he died, I was sitting by his bedside, in conversation with him, and I shall never forget the heavenly light that shined through his countenance as we together repeated the Apostles Creed and the Lords Prayer. And it was in compliance with his own request that I delivered the sermon at his funeral services in St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Charlotte, N.C.

The Reverend John Hermann Bernheim was a Jew, the eldest son of a distinguished Jewish family of Hechingen Principality, Hohenzollern, in the southern part of Germany. He was a graduate of one of the celebrated German universities, was a thorough scholar, familiar with several languages which he spoke fluently, and was an accredited poet. The original MSS of some of his poems are still in possession of his descendants. His parents were very devout and earnest in their Jewish faith, and were very desirous that their son should become a Jewish Rabbi. In compliance with their wishes and in obedience to their commands he began his studies with that end in view; but, while studying the Greek New Testament, the Holy Spirit carried the message home to his heart, convincing him of its truth, and converting him to Christianity. When his parents learned this fact, they were much surprised and sorely grieved, and earnestly and persistently besought him to cast aside the Christian faith and remain a devout Jew. But when he persisted in his faith in Jesus Christ as the

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true Messiah and refused to yield to their entreaties, they banished him from their home, and disowned him as their son.

Thus bereft of his parents and driven from his home, he sought a home and friends elsewhere. Stopping in his journey to ask for lodging for the night, at the Castle of Count Von der Recke Vollmerstein, he was kindly received and entertained. The Count, who was a Christian and a Lutheran, was much moved by his story, and provided a home for him, and the means of support, by employing him as tutor to his children, while he, himself, instructed him in the doctrines of the Lutheran Church. The young man not having been baptized, the Count sent him to the celebrated Rev. Karl August Doering, the great gifted hymn writer, who baptized him in the church at Elberfeld, where, in due time, he was solemnly ordained as an Evangelical Lutheran Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For a number of years he very successfully labored as missionary to the Jews, under the direction and control of the London Missionary Society. This work eventually took him to Iserlohm in the Province of Westphalia, Prussia, where in 1827, he was married to Miss Lizetta Dellmann.

While still living in Germany, there were born to these parents three children. Gotthardt Dellmann, of whom I shall speak more particularly; Mathilda, who lived and died a maiden lady and who is buried in Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston, S. C.; and Charles Hermann, who was a Lutheran Minister, well known in the Carolinas for many years. He was licensed by the South Carolina Synod at Bethlehem Church, S. C., November 13, 1855, and was ordained by the same Synod, at Pine Grove Church, S. C., October 31, 1858. He dies and was buried at Conover, N. C., January 20, 1900, at the age of 69 years, 9 months, and 14 days. Gw served churches in the South Carolina, North Carolina, and Tennessee Synods.

In 1832 the family emigrated to America. Here four more children were given them. Selma, who became Mrs. H. Parish, who lies buried at Charleston, S. C. Alvina Carolina, who married the Rev. John A. Porter, a minister of the M. E. Church South, and who is buried at Bennettsville, S. C. Emma Lizetta, who became the wife of the well known musician, Mr. J. F. Ruekert, of Washington, D. C.; and Adeline, who died in infancy.

The family first settled in Elizabethtown, Penn., and in 1833 the father, the Rev. John Hermann Bernheim, was received as a member of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, the Rev. Geisenhainer being president of the body at that time. Later, having purchased a small farm, he removed to Western Penn., and became the pastor of congregations in Armstrong County. Sometime after he removed to Kittanning, and still later to Newberryport, Mass., where he served as Missionary to the Jews, and where, in a few short months, he ended his earthly career and entered into his reward in heaven, September 27, 1847, at the age of 47 years.

The Reverend Doctor Gotthardt Dellmann Bernheim, the eldest child of this family, was born at Iserlohn, Province of Westphalia, Prussia, November 8, 1827, and was about four and one-half years old when the family came to America. At the age of five years he was entered as a pupil in a Lutheran Parochial School at Elizabethtown, where the family first settled. Here, under the instruction of Dr. Dobler, he studied English, while his parents taught him German. From there, in 1839, he went to a school in Indiana, Penn., where where he studied Latin under the instruction of a minister of the A. R. P. Church, and mathematics under a Mr. Barge, who boarded with his father's family. Here he had, for a fellow-student, the celebrated Dr. Farhardt, the father of Mrs. H. E. Monroe of Washington City, D. C., who is widely known in the Lutheran Church of America. From Indiana, Penn., he went to a school in Kittanning, Penn., the instructors were Dr. Painter and a Mr. Alcorn. The most celebrated orator at that time, Dr. McCorn, taught him elocution and the use of good English, and Prof. Schmidt gave him advanced instruction in German.

Thus he attended schools in Pennsylvania, from his fifth to his eighteenth year. He was confirmed on a Lutheran Church in Armstrong County, Penn., probably by his father, when he was about fifteen years of age. For some reason, which I have not been able to learn, his parents decided to send him South to complete his education. Accordingly, in the winter of 1845-6, his father took him in a sleigh from Kittanning to Pittsburg. From there he was conveyed, in one of those old-time stage coaches, to Cumberland, Md. Thence he travelled by Railway to Baltimore, Md., There he took passage on an old-time sailing vessel to Charleston, S. C. There he came under the influence of that great and good man, the Rev. Dr. John Bachmann, through whose good offices, the women of the "Ladies Society" of St. Johns Evangelical Lutheran Church of Charleston furnished the necessary means for the completion of his education.

Under the instruction of Dr. Ernest L. Hazelius, he spent four years at the Classical and Theological institution that had been established at Lexington, S. C., by the South Carolina Lutheran Synod, which has since become Newberry College, at Newberry, S. C., and the Theological Seminary at Columbia, S. C. From this institution he graduated with honors in 1849. He was licensed to preach in St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Lexington District, S. C., on November 14, 1849, and was ordained in St. Johns Church, Charleston, S. C., on May 15, 1853, by the South Carolina Synod, the Rev. Dr. John Bachmann delivering the sermon.

Dr. Bernheim was twice married: first, to Miss Elizabeth Crowe Clayton, at Charleston, S. C., by the Rev. Dr. John Bachmann, on April 25, 1854. Mrs. Bernheim was the only daughter of David and Elizabeth Clayton. The members of the Clayton family have been residents of Charleston for many years, and are numbered among the first families of the city. To these parents God gave eight children. Lizetta Clayton, born in Charleston, S. C., in 1856, now Mrs. Hood of Charlotte, N. C., whose writings are well known and much admired. She is the third poet in the family, the grandfather the Rev. John Hermann Bernheim, ~~having had the poetic~~ and the father the Rev. Dr. G. D. Bernheim having had the poetic talent in a marked degree.



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Florence Ernestine, deceased, born at Mt. Pleasant, N.C., December 6, 1858. John Charles Dellmann, deceased, born at Mt. Pleasant, N.C., October 14, 1860. Caroline Elmunda, deceased, born at Charlotte, N.C., in 1862. Anna Eloise, now Mrs. Berkheimer, of Wilmington, N.C., born at Charlotte, N.C., in 1864. Eugene Clayton, born at Mt. Pleasant, N. C., November 3, 1864 and baptized in the chapel of what was then North Carolina College, now known as the Collegiate Institute, on February 24, 1867. He is a successful business man of Southbridge, Mass., and the originator of the plan to present this picture to the Institute. William Gustavus of Philadelphia, Penn., Oscar Frederick of Allentown, Penn., twins, born in Mt. Pleasant, N.C., in 1868. Thus it is seen that five children were born in Mt. Pleasant, N.C., two during Dr. Bernheim's first term of service here while he was President of Mont Amoena Seminary, and three during his second residence here. There are eleven grandchildren, and two great grandchildren living.

His second marriage was at St. Louis, Mo., in April 1897, with Miss Amanda Ella Lease, of Nokomis, Ill., who survives him and is now residing in West Virginia. There were no children by this second marriage.

Immediately upon his licensure at St. Andrews Church, Lexington District, S. C., November 14, 1849, Dr. Bernheim was called as assistant to the Rev. Dr. John Bachmann who was then pastor of old St. John's Church in Charleston, S.C. This office he filled to the entire satisfaction of both people and pastor, for three years; and then, by the advice and with the assistance of Dr. John Bachmann, he organized the second Lutheran congregation of Charleston. The congregation was named Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, and worshipped in a house on Morris Street. It was upon the call of that congregation that he was ordained in 1854 that he might become its pastor. The blessing of God upon his work was soon manifested to a remarkable degree. In the city there was a Methodist Protestant congregation whose house of worship was on Wentworth Street. This whole congregation, under the influence of Dr. Bernheim, and the two congregations united under the name of Wentworth Street Evangelical Lutheran Church. Since then the name has been changed to St. Andrews Evangelical Lutheran Church. He served that congregation five years, and then resigned to accept the call of the St. John Pastorate of the North Carolina Synod, composed of St. John Church in Cabarrus County, N.C., and Bethel Church in Stanly County, N. C. He served this pastorate for two years, that is during 1859-60. While serving this pastorate the president of the Synod, the Rev. J. A. Linn Sr., and Dr. Bernheim were appointed a special committee to visit Wilmington, N.C., to look into the possibility of establishing a Lutheran Church at that place. So successful were they that the congregation was organized on May 31, 1858, under the name of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church. Later, that is in January 1859, Dr. Bernheim organized St. Marks Church in Charlotte, N.C.

During the two years that Dr. Bernheim was pastor of the St. Johns Pastorate, he was also the Financial Secretary and General Agent for North Carolina College, and was very active and successful in securing funds to assist the trustees in erecting two new buildings and in endow~~ing~~ing endowing professorships. The buildings mentioned were the two literary halls, one of which is still standing, the other having been destroyed by fire some years ago. In 1861 Dr. Bernheim accepted the call to become the pastor of St. Mark Church at Charlotte, N. C., which he had organized in 1859, and served the same for four years, or until the close of 1865. In connection with his work as pastor of St. Marks Church, he also served St. Michaels Evangelical Lutheran Church at Troutman, Iredell County, N. C., from 1862 to 1865.

This was the period of the War Between the States. War was the all absorbing topic, paralyzing business and distracting the minds of the people from everything else; money was worthless and everything was unsettled, so that it was almost impossible to make any advance in the work of the Church; and yet, he left St Marks in excellent condition, the foundations well laid, and the organization prepared to grow and prosper, which it did in the following years.

Early in the spring of 1859 an institution had been established at Mt. Pleasant, N. C., under the name of Mont Amoena Female Seminary, with Mrs. Dr. Bittle principal, and Mr. Paul Miller the president of the its Board of Directors. The property was owned by Dr. Bittle and his wife. While Dr. Bernheim was pastor at Charlotte, he came by purchase into possession of this property; and early in 1866 he removed to Mt. Pleasant and took charge of the institution. About this time the North Carolina Synod was considering the question of establishing a female school somewhere upon its territory. In 1868 Dr. Bernheim pro~~posed~~osed to make Mont Amoena an institution of the Synod, offering to property to the Synod for the sum of \$2000.00, and proposing to become the Synod's agent for securing the \$2000.00 by voluntary contributions, he agreeing to pay interest, and taxes on the property as long as he held it in his possession and make a legal title to the Synod as soon as the \$2000.00 should be raised. The Synod accepted his proposition with the conditions annexed. A Board of Trustees was elected consisting of the following named persons: Rev. L. A. Bikle, D. D., Rev. L. C. Groseclose, Dr. J. L. Henderson, Capt. J. A. Fisher, and Messrs. J. J. Misenheimer, Alexander Foil, and L. G. Heilig. Dr. Bikle of Concord, N. C., is the only surviving member.

In 1869 Dr. Bernheim reported the completion of his work as Synodical agent, having secured enough to pay the \$2000.00, and all necessary expenses. The title to the property was conveyed to the Synod. During the same time, while Dr. Bernheim was conducting Mont Amoena, that is in May 1867, the Synod appointed Dr. Bernheim, F. A. Sifered M. D., and Capt. J. A. Fisher, as a special committee to organize a church somewhere near Boston's School House in Rowan County, which they accomplished in June 1867, giving it the name of Ebenezer Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Dr. Bernheim became the first pastor and served the congregation in connection with his work for Mont Amana Seminary until the end of 1869, when he accepted the call to St. Pauls Evangelical Lutheran Church at Wilmington, N. C., which he has assisted in organizing ~~ten~~ in 1858. He served this congregation for twelve years, that is from January 2, 1870 to December 31, 1881; the longest time that he served any church during his entire ministerial life.

In the fall of 1876 his health became impaired, no doubt the result of the strenuous labors in which he had been engaged for years, in consequence of which the congregation granted him a vacation, which he spent travelling in Europe. During that time, and before he returned to America, that is on June 19, 1877, North Carolina College conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

At the close of his services as pastor of St. Pauls Church, Wilmington, N. C., he accepted the call to become the president of North Carolina College and Professor of Mental and Moral Sciences, History, English, and German Literature, which indicates the great versatility of the man, as well as the arduous labors upon which he entered. He served in that capacity during the collegiate years of 1882-3, and then removed to Phillipsburg, N. J., where he served as pastor of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church for nine years, that is 1883 to 1892, when he returned to Wilmington N. C., to accept the call of St. Matthews Evangelical Lutheran Church which had been established since his leaving Wilmington in 1881. St. Pauls Church becoming vacant by the resignation of Dr. F. W. Feschau, he also supplied that congregation from March 1893 to the end of January 1894. He continued to serve St. Matthews Church until October 15, 1899, when he tendered his resignation, on account of the infirmities of age, and ~~returned~~ retired from the active work of the ministry. On November 5, 1899 the congregation reluctantly accepted his resignation and expressed its love for him and the appreciation of his labors, by unanimously electing him Pastor Emeritus.

He remained in Wilmington until 1904, when he removed to Charlotte, N. C., to accept the chair of Biblical History in Elizabeth College for Women, which was then located in Charlotte, and the of which the late Dr. Charles B. King was president.

For a short time he served Morning Star Evangelical Lutheran Church, at Matthews, N. C. That was his last pastoral work. In the midst of his multitudinous and incessant labors as a Minister of the Gospel, reaching through sixty-seven years, he found time to develop and exercise his talent as an author. For some years he edited a magazine entitled "At Home and Abroad" which was widely circulated and much admired. He wrote an excellent history of "The First Twenty Years of the Life of St. Paul's Church of Wilmington N. C." He published "The Localities of the Reformation", a fine description of his travels in Europe while on a vacation.

He brought out the "History of the German Settlements in the Carolinas", which has become the standard for reference in the whole Lutheran Church in America. He, with Dr. G. H. Cox, by appointment of Synod, prepared and had published the "History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina in Commemoration of the Completion of the First Century of its Existence".

While pastor at Wilmington, Dr. Bernheim assisted in organizing the "Wilmington Historical and Literary Society", which has since been merged into the "North Carolina State Organization for Historical Research". His whole ministerial life, extending through sixty-seven years, was spent in the two Carolinas, with the exception of the nine years he was at Phillipsburg, New Jersey. For many years he was the Senior Minister of the North Carolina Synod, loved and honored by all, and was unanimously chosen by the Synod to deliver the sermon on the One-Hundredth Anniversary of its Organization, in St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Salisbury, N. C.

Thus for more than sixty-seven years, he labored in the Master's vineyard, doing grand and noble work in every field in which he labored, and winning many souls for Jesus, which will constitute stars in his crown of rejoicing, when the Master shall come to make up his jewels. Dr. Bernheim was a true son of the Church and a true friend to his fellowman. Simple in his habits, plain and unostentatious in his manner and attire, genial, candid and courteous in all his intercourse with his fellowmen, he was loved, honored and trusted by all who knew him.

A man's life is not measured by simply by the number of years he has lived in this world, whether they be few or many, but by the good that he has accomplished while here. Eighty-eight years, eleven months, and sixteen days, God permitted him to dwell on this earth. During that long life, all that there was in him, all that there was of him, was given to God, to the work of His Kingdom and to the uplifting and benefitting of the world. Then, ripe in years and rich in the fruitage of his labors, on Tuesday, October 24, 1916, the summons came forth from Him in Whom we live and move and have our being; from Him who is always nearer near to us than all things else, saying "Come up higher"; Come and dwell in the house of the Lord forever and ever. The days of thy labor on earth have been sufficient; henceforth there is laid up for thee the reward of exceeding great joy. Thou shalt no more fear the evil to come; the bonds of thy trial and suffering are loosed; thy Redeemer hath brought thee release from all sorrow; "Come up Higher!" He heard the summons, he answered the call, and went forth unto his Master. He attained unto the beginning of peace. He departed to the habitations of just men made perfect; to the communion of saints in heaven, to the life everlasting.

He, and men like him, are living witnesses of the fulfillment of the precious promise of God that, if we are faithful, we shall be made "Partakers of the divine nature" even while here in this life. A life like that which Dr. Bernheim lived in the flesh, consecrated to the services of the Master and the work of his kingdom, cannot die. "He being dead, yet speaketh". He still lives in the hearts and lives of others who came under his instruction and influence, and who have witnessed his faith and hope and love and faithfulness.

And now, it is with very great pleasure that, in the name of, and for the living members of Dr. Bernheim's family, I present this excellent and lifelike portrait to the Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute, through you, its Board of Trustees. Accept it, gentlemen, as an expression of their love and loyalty to the work to which their father devoted his life. Let it be hung on the walls of the institution as an expression of your appreciation of the gift and of the noble work that Dr. Bernheim did for this institution. Hang it where it may be seen by all who enter there. And, in the coming years, may many young men, as they look upon this picture, and learn of the life and labors of this great good man, be inspired to go forth, consecrating themselves, together with all that they have and are, to the service of God in the uplifting of mankind.

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